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Make my love return unto me !
Which thou wilt not deny ;
I pray for luck in my home,
Which thou also wilt not deny.

And the sign of the cross must thus be made thrice, and the invocation every time repeated.

This tale, I may observe, is not of the popular traditional type of Grimm and Perrault, but belongs to the dark lore current among witches and sorcerers, in which the story, although always ancient, is a mere frame for the ceremony and incantation. The marked difference between these narratives and mere *märchen* is very striking, because the former are in all cases guarded jealously, as profound and even awful secrets or formulas. I know an English lady of Italian life, *i. e.*, one born of Anglo-Italian parentage — who has for a long time been “in with the witches,” and she has never yet been able to get her most intimate *strega* to converse on sorcery, or repeat a line of a legend, except in the open air, far away from profane hearing. One reason for this is that all such stories, especially the incantations, are generally sung. This is done in a very peculiar tone of voice. It sometimes requires years to get the right intonation which renders a certain incantation effective. Therefore, if one were to be heard singing *alla strega*, or in witch tunes, to a young lady, there would be a “difficulty.”

Charles Godfrey Leland.

FLORENCE, ITALY, 1893.

THE BURIAL OF THE WREN. — I inclose a version of the song of the wren, a little different from the one printed in a recent number of the Journal. The variant is contributed by a young Irishman from Skibbereen. But why is the wren called the “king of all birds,” and what is the meaning of the song?

Mrs. Lucien Howe, Buffalo, N. Y.

The wren, the wren, the king of all birds,
St. Stephen's day it was caught in the furze ;
Although it is little, its family is great.
Cheer up my landlady and fill us a treat,
And if you fill it of the best,
In heaven I hope your soul will rest ;
But if you fill it of the small,
It won't agree with the wren boys at all.
Sing holly, sing ivy, sing ivy, sing holly,
To sing a bad Christmas is all but a folly.
On Christmas day I turned the spit,
I burned my fingers, I feel it yet ;
Between the finger and the thumb,
There lies a big blister, as large as a plum.
I hunted my wren five miles or yon,
Through hedges, ditches, briars, and bushes I knocked him down.
So here he s, as you may see,
Upon the top of a holly-tree.

With a bunch of ribbons by its side,
 And the Cork boys to be her guide.
 Shake, shake, shake of the box,
 All silver and no brass,
 Up with the kettle and down with the pot,
 Give us our answer, and let us begone.
 Come now, mistress, shake your feathers,
 Don't you think that we are beggars ;
 We are the boys came here to play,
 So give us our money and let us go away.

[As to our correspondent's request for information, reference may be made to the discussion of J. G. Frazer, in "The Golden Bough," (Lond. 1890), ii. 140 f. The custom has been prevalent in France, as well as in Great Britain and Ireland. In the Isle of Man, on Christmas Eve, the wren was hunted, killed, and fastened on the top of a pole. It was then carried from house to house, the bearers, meanwhile, chanting an appeal similar to that above given, at the same time collecting money. The wren was then laid on a bier and buried with much solemnity. The rite, according to another account, is described as taking place on St. Stephen's Day (December 26th). The bird, in the latter case, was hung in the centre of two crossing hoops, decorated with evergreen and ribbons. In the song, reference is said to have been made to boiling and eating the bird. The money collected appears to have been employed for a feast at night. English and Irish usages were substantially identical.

As to the significance of the custom, it is only clear that it must have been a survival of a sacred rite. Mr. Frazer gives Asiatic parallels, but these are not very close, nor indeed are the accounts complete or sufficient. His own conclusion is that the custom is the remains of a pastoral sacrament, in which the animal god is killed and sacramentally eaten. That the wren has in some degree a sacred character is made probable by the superstitions relating to the bird. But the whole subject is obscure.]

W. W. N.

MODERN ADDITIONS TO INDIAN MYTHS, AND INDIAN THUNDER SUPERSTITIONS. — The following remarks were made by the undersigned at the Annual Meeting, 1892 : —

I. On Mr. W. W. Newell's paper, entitled *Examples of Forgery in Folk-Lore*: (a) Some of the myths obtained from the Omahas and Ponkas bear marks of European origin, *e. g.*, one of the Orphan who had a magic sword and two magic dogs ; rescued a chief's daughter from a water monster ; cut off heads of monster, took the seven tongues home ; black man got heads, claimed chief's daughter as wife ; was detected and killed ; Orphan won chief's daughter (Contra. to N. A. Ethnology, vol. vi. pp. 108-131.) Some of the writer's Omaha informants were French half-bloods. (b) There have been modern additions made to myths. An Omaha stated that he made up part of the myth of the Big Turtle who went on the warpath. (c) When the writer was revising his material before preparing his article on "Omaha Sociology," he was furnished by one of the tribe (a